

CITY OF LODI

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

AGENDA TITLE: Approve specifications and authorization for bids for Thermal Imaging Camera

MEETING DATE: May 16, 2001

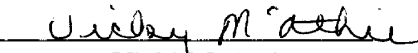
PREPARED BY: Michael Pretz, Fire Chief

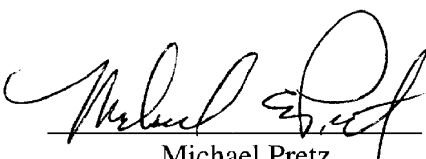
RECOMMENDED ACTION: That City Council approve the specifications for the above unit and authorize advertising for bids.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Funds for purchasing a thermal imaging camera are available in the 2000 – 2001 operating budget. Purchase will be made following an advertisement for bids period. Improvements in technology have created the ability for infrared thermal imaging to assist with firefighter operations. This piece of equipment will assist firefighter during rescue operations while performing interior offensive fire attacks. The camera allows firefighters to see through dense smoke thus cutting valuable time to locate fire victims and finding the seat of the fire. The timesavings will quickly pay for itself through the reduction of fire damage and injury to fire victims. The camera can be utilized for overhaul of hidden fires, hazardous materials situations, search and rescue and electrical emergencies. The thermal imaging camera provides invaluable safety to firefighter and potential major life saving to the citizens of Lodi. The cost is estimated to be \$27,000. **In addition to the initial warranty, an on going maintenance contract will cost an estimated \$1,200 annually.**

Funding Available:


Current Operating Budget


Vicki McActie
Finance Director


Michael Pretz
Fire Chief

MP/lh

APPROVED:


H. Dixon Flynn - City Manager

SECTIONS

Business
Features
News
Obituaries
Opinion
Sports
National News
Weather
Food
Health
Financial
Home

SERVICES

Archives
Automotive
Classifieds
Real Estate
Subscribe

DIRECTORIES

Churches
Staff Directory

HELP

FAQ
Online Forms

Lodi News-Sentinel
lodinews.com

ARCHIVES

February 24, 2001



Five new Lodi firefighters battle nerves, burning home

By Jennifer Pearson Bonnett/News-Sentinel staff
writer

The nervousness zips through the air like electricity. In one area stood the five fire recruits; in another the veterans of the Lodi Fire Department.

The new firefighters were hired Jan. 15. Three hail from surrounding fire districts while two are former volunteers. Four have experience handling the real thing, one is about to get his baptism by fire.

One by one, the two groups began to suit up — the turnouts, the jacket, the oxygen tank, the hood, the face mask, the gloves and then the helmet. It didn't matter that none of the recruits' names matched the ones printed on the fire garb.

Adrenaline seemed to fill the air.

Slowly the groups melded, ready to do the job they came to do — together.

It's day No. 2 of the hands-on training for the department's fire academy. A donated house was set ablaze in five different places, only to be squelched with water — slowly — to get the most experience fighting it.

As the rooms caught on fire one by one, the recruits moved toward the flames with hoses in hand and black smoke began to billow from the wooden window frames.

Finally, when the structure was fully engulfed in flames, the air was filled with the excitement of the moment.

No wonder, on Friday the department's latest recruits were finishing their sixth week of training and, therefore, moved one step closer to becoming full-fledge firefighters.

The department's academy, led by Battalion Chief George Juelch, is a requirement for all new employees.

Each undergoes eight weeks of testing and training which includes search and rescue, automobile extrication and hands-on fire fighting.

The classes also teach the trainees about how fires burn and how to find their ways through a smoke-filled building.

Friday's session was made possible by South Bay Foundry which donated the house at 42 N. Cluff Drive and its detached garage, used in Thursday's training.

"It's a great benefit for the company, but even better

for us,” Fire Capt. Jeff Larson said. “This is invaluable experience for the new recruits.”

Brad Doell, a six-year veteran from the Mokelumne Fire District and one of the Lodi recruits, remained visibly excited during most of the training Friday.

“It’s scary every time you go in there, but at times like this you revert to how you were trained and it’s like second nature,” he said. “And, it’s still fun.”

Rookie Eduardo Ibarra was just as excited. Greener than his fellow recruits, he served as a volunteer for the Oakland Fire Department for six months before being hired by Lodi.

Although he had never fought a real fire until Friday, Ibarra said the experience was excellent, but the anticipation literally kept him up all night.

“I couldn’t sleep, just thinking about it. You get an adrenaline rush just getting in there,” he said.

Ibarra, the only recruit without previous experience, said this was the job he wanted to do since age 15.

He was living in Mexico City during the 1985 earthquake and at that time decided he wanted to help save people.

Other recruits include Mike Gold of Petaluma, and locals Shane Langone and Mike Woznick. The latter two served with the Woodbridge Fire Department for 10 years.

Gold worked for the California Department of Forestry for one season and served as a volunteer for both the Sonoma and Marin county departments, Juelch said.

All five are certified Emergency Medical Technicians with defibrillator experience, he said.

On March 9, they will undergo a small graduation ceremony before being presented their badges, personal equipment and new jackets with their names on the back.

[This week’s two-day training burn also served another

purpose: On Thursday and Friday, firefighters had the chance to test out for themselves new thermal imaging cameras courtesy of the manufacturer.

The cameras, which can see through smoke, are used to find fire victims and locate the source of the flames.

The department does not currently own one of the \$20,000 cameras.

Juelch said the fire academy training is possible due to off-duty personnel being willing to work. Overtime employees covered the districts while several on-scene trucks could respond if needed.

About 25 firefighters participated in the burn.

The training is also made possible by community donations.

The house aside, Payless Lumber donated sheets of plywood for Thursday's training fire while J&D Auto Body allowed the group to use its cars and facilities for an auto extrication exercise the five trainees underwent earlier this month.

"This is a real good group of guys," Juelch said.

Ibarra had similar sentiments.

"I'm the greenest of all of the recruits, but that's the best thing because it makes me work even harder," he said. "This is the best job there is."

As the building finally turned to ashes, the air was filled with relief.

No one was hurt and everyone learned.

And five new Lodi firefighters have passed their latest test.

Comments about this story? Send mail to the News-Sentinel newsroom.

Search for

Word one

☒ and ☐ or ☐ not